



# Southwestern Idaho News

ADA, ADAMS, BOISE, CANYON, ELMORE, GEM, OWYHEE, PAYETTE, VALLEY & WASHINGTON COUNTIES

## ECONOMIC TRENDS

The Boise-Nampa Metropolitan Statistical Area's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate edged up a tenth of a percentage point in March to 2.6 percent as more job seekers flooded the market than it could immediately absorb. Despite this slight increase, March's unemployment rate was sixth-tenths of a percentage point lower than in March 2006. The number of jobless workers was also 16.1 percent — 1,500 — below one year earlier. Even with this slight upward movement in the rate, the metropolitan area is still a job seeker's market. When the unemployment rate drops this low, below what most economists consider full employment, trained workers becomes scarce, theoretically pushing wages higher and bringing better opportunities for people with skills. The additional 300 people looking for work in March should be a boon to area employers.

Nonfarm jobs increased during March by 1.3 percent, raising total jobs 3,500 to 274,200. This expanding job base is offering some multiple job holders opportunities to work just one job that pays better

	Civilian Labor Force	Number Unem- ployed	Percent Unem- ployed	Number Employed
<b>Ada</b>	199,120	4,769	2.4	194,351
<b>Adams</b>	2,080	110	5.3	1,970
<b>Boise</b>	3,550	118	3.3	3,432
<b>Canyon</b>	83,412	2,586	3.1	80,825
<b>Elmore</b>	11,114	382	3.4	10,732
<b>Gem</b>	7,858	253	3.2	7,605
<b>Owyhee</b>	5,186	101	1.9	5,085
<b>Payette</b>	10,620	382	3.6	10,238
<b>Valley</b>	4,992	180	3.6	4,813
<b>Washington</b>	5,308	202	3.8	5,107
<b>Statewide</b>	752,439	21,411	2.8	731,028

**Southwestern Idaho Table 1: Boise City-Nampa MSA Labor Force & Employment (Ada, Canyon, Boise, Gem and Owyhee counties)**

	Mar 2007*	Feb 2007	Mar 2006	% Change	
				Last Month	Last Year
<b>INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE</b>					
<b>Seasonally Adjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	299,100	297,800	289,400	0.4	3.4
Unemployment	7,800	7,500	9,300	4.0	-16.1
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.6	2.5	3.2		
Total Employment	291,300	290,300	280,100	0.3	4.0
<b>Unadjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	300,400	299,100	291,400	0.4	3.1
Unemployment	9,100	9,300	10,200	-2.2	-10.8
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.0	3.1	3.5		
Total Employment	291,300	289,800	281,200	0.5	3.6
<b>JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK</b>					
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**</b>	277,700	274,200	264,300	1.3	5.1
<b>GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES</b>	56,800	55,900	53,500	1.6	6.2
<b>Natural Resources &amp; Construction</b>	24,800	23,900	23,000	3.8	7.8
Construction	24,500	23,600	22,700	3.8	7.9
<b>Manufacturing</b>	32,000	32,000	30,500	0.0	4.9
Durable Goods	26,000	26,000	24,200	0.0	7.4
Wood Product Manufacturing	2,600	2,600	2,700	0.0	-3.7
Fabricated Metal Products Mfg.	1,500	1,500	1,500	0.0	0.0
Machinery Manufacturing	1,300	1,300	1,200	0.0	8.3
Computer & Electronic Manufacturing	15,300	15,400	14,100	-0.6	8.5
Transportation Equipment Mfg.	2,400	2,300	2,100	4.3	14.3
Other Durable Goods	2,900	2,900	2,600	0.0	11.5
Nondurable Goods	6,000	6,000	6,300	0.0	-4.8
Food Manufacturing	4,200	4,300	4,300	-2.3	-2.3
Printing & Related Support Activities	700	700	700	0.0	0.0
Other Nondurable Goods	1,100	1,000	1,300	10.0	-15.4
<b>SERVICE-PROVIDING INDUSTRIES</b>	220,900	218,300	210,800	1.2	4.8
<b>Trade, Transportation, &amp; Utilities</b>	53,100	52,500	50,400	1.1	5.4
Trade	45,600	45,000	43,200	1.3	5.6
Wholesale Trade	12,100	12,000	12,200	0.8	-0.8
Wholesalers, Durable Goods	6,900	6,800	7,300	1.5	-5.5
Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	3,600	3,600	3,600	0.0	0.0
Retail Trade	33,500	33,000	31,000	1.5	8.1
Food & Beverage Stores	4,300	4,300	4,400	0.0	-2.3
General Merchandise Stores	7,300	7,100	6,200	2.8	17.7
All Other Retail Trade	21,900	21,600	20,400	1.4	7.4
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	7,500	7,500	7,200	0.0	4.2
Utilities	400	700	600	-42.9	-33.3
Transportation & Warehousing	7,100	6,800	6,600	4.4	7.6
<b>Information</b>	4,700	4,700	5,500	0.0	-14.5
Telecommunications	1,500	1,500	2,400	0.0	-37.5
<b>Financial Activities</b>	15,100	15,000	15,000	0.7	0.7
Finance & Insurance	10,700	10,700	10,900	0.0	-1.8
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	4,400	4,300	4,100	2.3	7.3
<b>Professional &amp; Business Services</b>	40,400	39,600	38,200	2.0	5.8
Professional, Scientific, & Technical	11,800	11,900	11,600	-0.8	1.7
Management of Companies & Ent.	5,600	5,600	5,700	0.0	-1.8
Administrative & Support & Waste Mgmt.	23,000	22,100	20,900	4.1	10.0
<b>Educational &amp; Health Services</b>	32,500	32,200	31,800	0.9	2.2
Educational Services	2,600	2,600	2,800	0.0	-7.1
Health Care & Social Assistance	29,900	29,600	29,000	1.0	3.1
Hospitals	9,700	9,700	9,400	0.0	3.2
<b>Leisure &amp; Hospitality</b>	24,200	23,600	22,900	2.5	5.7
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	3,100	2,900	2,900	6.9	6.9
Accommodation & Food Services	21,100	20,700	20,000	1.9	5.5
Accommodation	2,400	2,400	2,200	0.0	9.1
Food Services & Drinking Places	18,700	18,300	17,800	2.2	5.1
<b>Other Services</b>	7,700	7,700	6,500	0.0	18.5
<b>Total Government</b>	43,200	43,000	40,500	0.5	6.7
Federal Government	5,600	5,500	5,500	1.8	1.8
State & Local Government	37,600	37,500	35,000	0.3	7.4
State Government	14,000	13,900	13,600	0.7	2.9
State Government Education	4,700	4,600	4,900	2.2	-4.1
State Government Administration	9,300	9,300	8,700	0.0	6.9
Local Government	23,600	23,600	21,400	0.0	10.3
Local Government Education	15,300	15,300	13,400	0.0	14.2
Local Government Administration	8,300	8,300	8,000	0.0	3.8

\* Preliminary Estimate

\*\*Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

and part-time workers the chance at full-time employment.

In March, construction began seasonal hiring, adding 900 new jobs from February and up 1,800 from one year ago due to a robust commercial building sector. New retail outlets, restaurants and bank buildings are going up all over the valley. Residential construction is also picking up steam. Local home sales rose during March following the slower winter months. The monthly gain in construction jobs accounts for over 25 percent of March's total nonfarm job growth.

Other sectors posting strong job gains in March were retail trade, helped by the opening of several chain retailers, and administrative support as employment services began to get busier. Leisure and hospitality saw solid growth with area golf courses and restaurants gearing up for the busy summer season. The March 2007 civilian labor force and total employment figures for all 10 counties in southwestern Idaho are shown in Table 2 on page 19.

## AREA DEVELOPMENTS

### BOISE MSA

- Meridian-based Idaho Truss, which makes prefabricated walls, staircases and roof trusses, has opened a new manufacturing plant in Boise that employs 60. The new plant increases the company's manufacturing capacity by four times while adding some new equipment. Once fully operational, the new plant will employ 100.
- Caldwell-based Casa Valdez just passed a milestone, celebrating 30 years in business. Casa Valdez makes tortillas in a 22,500-square-foot factory and employs 66 people. Their tortillas are shipped daily to outlets in Idaho, Oregon, Wyoming, Nevada and major grocery store chains.
- Canyon County's Treasure Valley Marketplace recently welcomed several new retail stores including Best Buy employing 100 people; DressBarn, a women's clothing store; Maurices, a clothing store for men and women that is also the parent company to DressBarn; Lane Bryant, another women's clothing retailer, and Michael's craft store.
- Kohl's recently opened its first two stores in the area, one in the Treasure Valley Marketplace and the other in Meridian. The two 89,000-square-foot stores employ approximately 200 people each.
- The influx of the new retail outlets has not only brought jobs to the county, but residents are saving travel time and gas expenses by shopping closer to home, and they are keeping their dollars in the county economy. The property taxes the county collects from the new commercial buildings further diversify its property tax base, which has been leaning heavily towards residences. Commercial and industrial properties are typically more profitable in that they need fewer services than the typical residential area. Thus, the more commercial and industrial properties a county has, the easier it is for the county to avoid huge increases in residential property taxes.
- Another large retail development, the 100-acre Nampa Gateway Center, is currently under construction at Interstate 84 and the Garritty Boulevard exit. A JCPenney store will anchor the mall, which will include 30 to 35 other tenants.
- Southwestern Idaho's first road project funded by GARVEE bonds recently got under way as construction crews began to widen the westbound off-ramp at Eagle Road. The new off-ramp will be two lanes splitting into four lanes, which will become two northbound lanes and two southbound lanes. In addition to expanding the width of the off ramp, crews will lengthen the ramp by 1,600 feet which should help with the traffic backed-up onto the interstate that is so common at Eagle Road. The cost of this project is \$2.5 million. More information is available at the Idaho Transportation Department Web site at <http://itd.idaho.gov/projects/>.
- Movie rental company Netflix, which opened a distribution center in Boise last June, employs about a dozen people and handles an average of 8,500 DVDs each day.
- Joe's Sporting Goods, formerly known as G.I. Joe's, is planning to open a second store in Nampa next spring or summer. The company opened its first 52,000-square-foot store in Meridian this spring.
- The Meridian School District has recently moved its administrative offices and personnel to the former Jabil Circuit manufacturing plant. The Jabil building has been vacant for over four years, and the school district bought it in 2006. This fall the district will move some of its professional-technical programs into the building including architecture, construction, pre-engineering and computer networking. Other plans for the building include converting the cafeteria into a culinary arts program and establishing a rigorous college prep program.
- MPC Computers has been awarded part of a large federal contract for hardware and software products. MPC was named as a prime contractor among other contractors. Officials of the 550-employee company in Nampa said the contract is worth a total of \$5.6 billion over seven years.
- Winco Foods has begun construction on its latest area store in Eagle. Located next to Home Depot on

State Street and Highway 55, Winco's fifth store will also be the largest at 92,000 square feet. The new Winco should open in early 2008.

- Eagle-based TenXsys has landed a \$750,000 contract from the Department of Defense to research using sensors it makes to enable military amputees to better use prosthetic limbs so they can get back to active duty sooner. TenXsys will work with Boise State researchers to test sensor prototypes on volunteers later in 2007 to determine movement patterns and energy use, potentially decreasing rehabilitation time.

#### *ELMORE COUNTY*

- Atlanta Gold, the company that wants to start mining gold about 1½ miles south of the city of Atlanta, has recently moved its headquarters to Mountain Home from Boise. Atlanta Gold has been caught up in some turmoil regarding its proposed mining operation because it will use cyanide leaching methods to extract the ore from the rock. Atlanta Gold has changed the route for trucking in supplies to a more indirect route that is farther away from the Boise River to avoid any potential damage from a spill. Atlanta Gold owns and is in negotiations to acquire more property that would allow it to mine about 2 million ounces of gold over the next 12 years. At current prices that much gold would be worth over \$1 billion.
- Marathon Cheese recently held a ribbon cutting of the new plant in Mountain Home. The company is currently running three production lines and employs 74 people. At full capacity, it will be operating 16 production lines and employ approximately 500.

#### *PAYETTE COUNTY*

- Teton Machine Co. of Payette recently added another piece of equipment valued at almost \$750,000. The new machine operates unattended overnight and over weekends. It produces parts to extremely small tolerances. Teton officials attribute the ability to buy new equipment to the aerospace and medical contracts the company has acquired in recent years.
- Mike Hannigan of Hannigan Chevrolet in Payette and Hannigan Motors of Ontario, Ore., said he has acquired enough land near the Interstate 84 exchange to combine the dealerships. The Payette County Commission has applied for a \$500,000 community development block grant to help fund public facility improvements in the area. Hannigan estimates the new dealership will bring in 34 new jobs for Payette County once this project is completed in fall 2008.
- Homegrown Poultry LLC of New Plymouth purchased the state's first-ever license for operating a chicken and rabbit processing plant in February. Homegrown Poultry is a custom processor for local farmers and

other individuals who raise chickens. The plant's owners expect to process over 18,000 chickens this year.

#### *VALLEY COUNTY*

- Fairmont Tamarack, which is being developed by Andre Agassi and Steffi Graf, held its first land sale of 125 condos and hotel condominiums in March, raising approximately \$140 million. The properties sold out in seven hours in this third phase of Tamarack Resort. Prices for the condos ranged from \$600,000 to \$3.8 million. This sale brought in more international buyers, mostly from Mexico. Idaho residents ranked third among U.S. buyers behind Florida and California. Since Tamarack began selling property in January 2004, it has raised \$499 million.

#### *ADAMS COUNTY*

- The city of Council has decided to implement a strategic plan developed regionally by the Valley Adams Planning Partnership to address growth management including affordable housing and economic development. In addition, the city wants to focus on business and work force retention and work force development.

#### *WASHINGTON COUNTY*

- Weiser Airport will use a \$393,000 Federal Aviation Administration grant to install instrument landing equipment. The state of Idaho and the city of Weiser will split the rest of the costs, about 5 percent. According to airport officials, over 50 percent of flights at the Weiser Airport are commercial.
- Weiser Butterfly Kisses recently had a grand opening. The store carries locally made products and gift items.
- Mirage Trailers of Nampa has expanded to Weiser. Mirage purchased the old HayPro plant south of town where it will manufacture two product lines. The Balboa, which is a toy-hauler trailer complete with kitchen, bathroom and beds, and an entry level cargo trailer called TNT. Mirage has 83 workers at the Weiser facility with plans to expand to 150.

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